THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Need to introduce new System of Rice Intensification (SRI) to boost-rice production

1242.SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the new System of Rice Intensification (SRI) used in Tamil Nadu supported by World Bank Project which sharply cut the use of water by 32 per cent and increases yields up to 40 to 80 per cent per hectare than conventional rice cultivation; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to introduce the system in other parts of the country in order to boost rice production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) reportedly conserves water and enhances the productivity of rice. The field experiments conducted in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere in the country have indicated promising impact.

(b) In order to boost the rice production in the country, Government of India has introduced the SRI technique in other parts of the country for its popularization by organizing demonstrations under various crop production programmes such as Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice) implemented through Macro Management Programme and National Food Security Mission-Rice (NFSM-Rice).

Incentives to farmers under new farm policy

1243.DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that according to Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, sponsored by United Nations, agriculture has been neglected in South Asian Regions, particularly in India;

(b) if so, the initiatives Government has taken to give priority to agriculture in India;

(c) the incentives given to farmers under the new farm policy announced by Government;

(d) whether farmers have expressed reservations about the new farm policy; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the details of the new farm policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Government of India is aware of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The survey, *inter alia*, highlights the need for making agriculture sector economically and socially viable and for improving productivity in order to reduce poverty in the Asia and Pacific Region. Several steps have been taken by the Government of India for revitalization of the agriculture and allied sectors by

enhancing the public investment in the sector. The investment measured in terms of Gross Capital Formation (GCF) in agriculture as a proportion of GDP in the agriculture sector has shown a continuous improvement during the period 2003-04 to 2006-07. The plan outlays for agriculture and allied sectors have also been increased. Other initiatives of the Government of India include, *inter alia,* approval of the National Policy for Farmers, 2007, based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers, launching of new programmes/schemes like Bharat Nirman, National Food Security Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Horticulture Mission, National Bamboo Mission etc., and implementation of the scheme of debt-waiver and debt-relief, as announced in the Union Budget for 2008-09, to address the problem of indebtedness of the farmers. As a result, performance as well as growth rate of agriculture and allied sector has improved. The foodgrain production during 2007-08, as per the Fourth Advance Estimates, is 230.67 million tonnes, which is an all time record.

(c) The National Policy for Farmers, 2007 aims to improve the economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of farmers. The provisions in the National Policy for Farmers for the benefit of the farmers include, *inter alia,* asset reforms including skill development to empower the farmers; support services like agricultural bio-security, agro-meteorology; inputs and services like distribution of good quality seeds, disease-free planting material and soil-health passbooks containing integrated information on farm soil to improve soil health with corresponding advisories to the farmers; credit and insurance; support services for women farmers like provision of creches, childcare centres and adequate nutrition; revamping extension, training and knowledge connectivity; comprehensive social security scheme for farmers; improving marketing opportunities for farmers through better infrastructure and effective implementation of Minimum Support Price; and harnessing science and technology for giving a boost to agriculture; etc.

(d) and (e) The Government has not received any specific communication from the farmers expressing reservations on the National Policy for Farmers, 2007.

National market regulatory system for agricultural goods

1244.SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to stabilize marketing functioning under an independent and neutral regulator to offer a truly national market for agricultural goods, transparent price and portal base trading;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, what kind of agricultural reforms Government would like to bring and encourage direct buyer producer dealings and portal based trading; and

(d) the details of system envisaged in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The agricultural marketing is a State subject and to achieve an efficient system of buying and selling of agricultural commodities, most of the State Governments/UTs have enacted legislations (APMC Act) to provide for regulation of agricultural produce markets.